

IMPROVING THE WEST SIDE.

GRADUALLY SWEEPING AWAY THE SHANTY DWELLERS.

Peculiar Architecture and Habits—Evictions—Busted—Dogs Trained to Bite Marshals—Where the Evicted Go—Instances of Wealth.

Although in the district bounded by Sixth street, 125th street, Eighth avenue, and the Hudson River, there are scarcely any darkies, it may properly be characterized as Shanty-land; for up to the present time there have been there few other buildings than shanties. Of these there have been more than twenty-five hundred perched on and between the rocks, sheltering a population—according to census allowance of five to a family—not less than 12,500 souls. Now, owing to the efforts of the West Side Association, there are a few hundred less, the remaining ones being rapidly swept away, and it is confidently expected that within a few months they will be entirely disappeared from that region. It is by no means a bad sign in the city, in which there is so little information. The least measures necessarily resort to for the eviction of the shanty dwellers have awakened among that industrious population a vigorous antagonism to strangers, and they have no delicacy about demonstrating their hostility. The men among them, when they have brushed a total stranger and subsequently discovered that he was neither a denizen of the neighborhood, a reporter, nor a member of the West Side Association, will affect a mild regret. The women, in the torrent of their generally unprintable vituperation, however, are far from being so gentle. The evictions, so far, though by no after-considerations of having misdirected their energies, but the dogs are the worse. There now are many who, in the course of their greater care to each family, and many have actually been trained to attack any stranger who comes in sight with a pup in his hand.

Shanty-land is a picture. Its great feature is its ingenuous utilization of the most incongruous heterogeneous, and unromancing materials. In the first place, New York, in second-hand buildings, wrecks of dwellings that have either been torn down to make place for more pretentious structures or have been left to decay, are scattered and rottenness. The patrons of these dealers are the shanty-builders. Nothing comes amiss to them. Fragments of iron, wood, glass, tin, old boxes, even if found worse than useless, are turned into walls. Here and there a sheet of asphalt-coated material from some dwelling is used with such effect that the shanty looks like the most stanch and aristocratic shanty that is made entirely out of an old tin roof. The only drawback to the pride and joy of the inhabitants of a shanty is that, despite their best efforts, the rain comes upon it to hear its internal crier. There was a curious old chap living in one of these shanties on Eighth street, between and Eighth avenue up to about a year ago, who did not seem to mind even that, but when they came to him, he became a bit more grim, saying, "I've got a good number of years he lived in that rusty tin shanty, which had but one pane of glass glass for a window, but in that time it never appeared in the rain." And that, above all others, was his acquaintance, was permitted to pay him a neighborly visit, or even saw him out of his house except in the dead of night. He died in that house all day; no one knew where he lived. That he lived they knew by little else than the faint smoke from his chimney. Once he applied for a pension, when he came into the office, he said it was entirely empty, and the most recent trace of his presence was a big hole dug in front of the window, so that the rain did not penetrate the room. And he was a miser, and that he carried always a huge potful of gold that had been hidden in the shanty.

All the shanties proper have dirt floors or rock, as the natural surface of the ground on which they stand. They are built in pairs, and our story in height. Front rooms, and therefore upper, shanties, here and there have bits of board on the ground to serve as a sort of platform for the chimney, the dignity of a garret. Their chimneys are almost as varied as they are numerous—curious composite creations made of pieces of broken pipes, and of old iron, dressed stocks and mud, clay-coated bricks, loosely piled bricks, &c. The bricks make the most desirable shanty, in case of a fire, the facility with which, in case of a faction fight in the neighborhood, they are likely to be utilized as missiles. Jagged and irregular wrecks of iron, wood, and stones, of swords, tatters, and patches, some of them at this season, or a few weeks later, are really pretty and picturesque. Their colors are white, yellow, red, green, blue, and, in a few cases, even black. Some are in a picture-like arrangement, some are entirely devoid of whatever their class, love for the beautiful in nature, finds expression in the plain, simple, naive ways of climbing vines, morning glory, nasturtium, and sweet pea—that soon cover the low walls with their wealth of foliage and bloom.

Taken, all in all, so far as the shanty-dwellers are concerned, it is not hard to believe that existence in them is not much more than the mere creation of a temporary home down town. The chief objection to them, from a sanitary point of view, is that they are often built near drainage and sewerage. Every item of refuse and filth cast out from the shanties either goes, in rare instances, into underground sinks, more holes, which are often the cause of flooding, or is scattered broadcast on the surface of the rocks and earth, to poison the atmosphere, saturate the air, and render the air impure. The result is a most noxious nuisance, but until the section for the location of first-class buildings—such as owners of the land, who are not up to date, are not yet in a position to afford any real consideration to the present vigor and earnestness of the shanty-dwellers.

Seven years ago, when real estate in New York was at its lowest value, taxes were a burden hardly to be borne, and the condition of the city condition of things were very vague and distant. Many land owners found it a great relief to grant ground leases to their property, heretofore unoccupied, and the rent received to go down.

Operators—Bustlers, and bakers—make a living, while the rest of the shanty-dwellers, though arrived at, but none the less keenly appreciated, that stimulates the hand-to-mouth existence of the poor.

Although poverty and ignorance are the rule in Shanty-land, there are exceptions, worth of note, and we have heard mentioned as owing to severe disabilities, who were in the army during the war of the rebellion, and have saved money there, and has been adding to his savings since, so that he is now worth about \$20,000. Several who have already submitted to the pressure for their removal have, however, sold their houses, and given them to their possessors at three or four times what the ground rent was about \$3 a month per shanty.

Of course there was no more appreciation of these houses than in the time the knowledge of the law, and the dwelling here that there was a law forbidding the erection of houses on the streets, so the streets were filled with shanties, and were not disturbed, but everywhere else they piled their rude structures, and with indifference enclosed whatever patches of ground they required, in irregular, haphazard fashion. The shanties had been condemned squatters, but not more than one-tenth of them deserved that title. The others occupied their property legally, and paid their rent, and paid their rent, and paid their rent.

Some of them achieved proprietary dignity, building shanties which they leased to poor people, and others, who were speculators, owned eleven shanties between Seventy-ninth and Eighteenth streets; others, eight, nine, and ten, and so on, up to seventeen.

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In several instances newly arrived immigrants have bought shanties for various prices, from

\$8 up to \$200, of which they have only been allowed the occupancy three or four days before they were evicted by the city marshals and their newly purchased homes were demolished.

Wanted—Females.

A T 414 EAST 17TH ST., store.—Steady work wanted to lay floor, paint, &c. Good wages will be treated fairly and paid for your work every week, while machines are paid for only at the rate of \$2 per hour. Apply at 143 Mercer st.

A TANTED.—Operators on lawn suits and linen suits, both stores paid, also a woman lady in age, to steady work, to operate during leisure time. Apply at 143 Mercer st.

C OUPLE of strong girls wanted to learn ironing—good wages also laundry, steady work, and paid while learning. Apply to G. SIDENBERG & CO., 47 and 49 Mercer st.

GIRLS wanted, good situations ready; good wages also laundry, steady work, and paid while learning. Apply to 143 Mercer st.

A T 100 OPERATORS on cloths and suits; also laundry, steady work, and paid while learning. Apply to 143 Mercer st.

EXPERT muckers on Wilcox & Gibbs machine, on undergarments; also a few learners taken. Apply to 143 Mercer st.

A T 100 OPERATORS wanted, in and out of the house, for ladies underwear, on W. & W. machine, Monday to Friday. Apply to 143 Mercer st.

LADY wanted, for private family cook, waitress, chamber maid, good wages. Particulars, 238 8th av., near 18th st.

A RTIFICIAL FLOWERS—girls wanted—also learners; steady work. Apply to 143 Mercer st.

A T 143 MERRICK AV.—W. & W. machine, on undergarments, steady work, and paid while learning. Apply to 143 Mercer st.

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